

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 496

By Ketron

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Chief Petty Officer  
Harriett Lavinia Howard of Smyrna.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Chief Petty Officer Harriett Lavinia Howard of Smyrna; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Howard was an exemplary public servant who dedicated a large portion of her life to helping Tennessee's veterans. She was a beacon of hope and dedication to the many men and women she helped through her tireless efforts and her unceasing advocacy for veterans issues; and

WHEREAS, born on February 19, 1924, in Chattanooga, Harriett Lavinia Howard was the daughter of Alfred Mann Howard, Sr. and Louise Yater Howard Barnes. She grew up in Nashville with her brother, Naval Captain Alfred Mann Howard, Jr. and sister Mary Howard Hibbett; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Howard graduated from Central High School in 1941 as a National Honor Society member and immediately gained employment with the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, granted a military leave of absence from the railroad, Harriett Howard enlisted in the U.S. Navy's Women's Reserve (WAVES) on June 21, 1944, and reported for active duty on July 13, 1944 at Recruit Training Center, Hunter College, in Bronx, New York; and

WHEREAS, upon the completion of her recruit training, Harriett Howard reported for direct duty assignment to Bureau of Naval Ordnance, Washington, D.C. and would later be discharged from active duty on August 1, 1946, with the rating of Specialist (X) First Class, Supervisor IBM Key punch Unit, Bureau of Naval Ordnance; and

WHEREAS, Harriett Howard was dedicated to serving her country and re-enlisted in the Naval Reserve in November of 1946 and would advance to Chief Personnelman on September 16, 1964; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Howard returned to Nashville in September of 1946 and her old job in the Accounting Department of the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway but took a leave of absence from the company from September 1947 through 1948 to attend Vanderbilt University on the G.I. Bill before returning to the railway; and

WHEREAS, in 1958, she was transferred to Louisville, Kentucky, in the merger of the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway and the Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad and would call Louisville her home of record until 1981; and

WHEREAS, Chief Howard was recalled to active duty during the Vietnam War for three years and served as a Company Commander at Recruit Training Command (Women), Bainbridge, Maryland, from June 1966 to July 1969; and

WHEREAS, in October 1973, Harriett Howard retired from the L&N Railroad with thirty-three years, having rendered sterling service as Staff Assistant to the Vice President of Intermodal Traffic. She would then accept the position of office manager with the firm of Hillerich and Bradsby, the legendary Louisville Slugger Bat Company, for four years; and

WHEREAS, recalled to active duty once again in the Fall of 1977, Chief Howard served as Leads Center Supervisor at Navy Recruiting District, Louisville, Kentucky, and it was at this command that she was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal for her outstanding achievements in a program supporting Navy Recruiting; and

WHEREAS, in 1979, Harriett Howard was named Recruiting Support Person of the Year by Commander Navy Recruiting Command, Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, in August 1981 she was transferred from Louisville to Navy Recruiting District, Jacksonville, Florida, where she was later awarded the Navy Achievement Medal and her Second Award of the Navy Commendation Medal; and

WHEREAS, retiring from the U.S. Navy Reserve on February 19, 1984, Chief Howard had been stationed at Naval Reserve Centers in Nashville, Tennessee; Louisville, Kentucky; and Owensboro, Kentucky; and assigned to active duty training at Charleston, South Carolina;

Norfolk, Virginia; Bainbridge, Maryland; New Orleans, Louisiana; Washington, D.C.; and Memphis, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Howard would rise to the rank of Chief Petty Officer during her thirty-nine year military career which ran concurrent with her thirty-three year civilian employment because of her employer's military-leave policy during active-duty periods; and

WHEREAS, after her retirement from active duty, Harriett Howard became an untiring advocate for veterans throughout this State. Ms. Howard was a fixture at the Alvin C. York Veterans Administration Medical Center in Murfreesboro and the Nashville VA Hospital, where she volunteered much of her time; and

WHEREAS, in 1986, after learning that VA officials continued to deny adequate medical coverage for female veterans at the York and Nashville VA Hospitals, Harriet Howard embarked on a "public communications war," sending a barrage of faxes, news releases, phone calls, and letters to senators, representatives, and the White House in a successful attempt to secure better medical coverage; and

WHEREAS, in the 1990s, Ms. Howard again proved to be a formidable ally for this State's veterans. After VA officials attempted to close the York VA facility, which at the time treated more than 100,000 veterans from all over the Southeast, Harriet Howard gathered more than a quarter-million signatures of support in a petition to keep York VA's doors open. Today, York remains open and accessible to those veterans in need, a testimony to her dedication and commitment; and

WHEREAS, Harriet Howard continued to serve as a champion of veterans issues well into her ninth decade, and she personally raised more than \$125,000 for the Tennessee Fisher House, which will be dedicated in November on the York VA Medical Center campus; and

WHEREAS, a member of the Board of Directors of the World War II Memorial Trust, Harriett Howard was instrumental in obtaining a \$20,000 donation from the State of Tennessee for the Women's Memorial in Washington, D.C. to honor the 20,000 plus women veterans who have proudly called the Volunteer State home; and

WHEREAS, highly respected by her peers and colleagues, Chief Howard served as Tennessee State Director WAVES National from July 1989 to July 2002; President of Volunteer

Unit #94 of WAVES National from July 2002 to July 2008; Treasurer of the United Tennessee Veterans Association from 1999 to 2008; and

WHEREAS, Chief Howard was elected by the United Tennessee Veterans Association to the Tennessee Veterans Home Foundation, Inc. from 2000 to 2005, where she served as Chair of the Fundraising Committee and in March 2005 she was appointed to serve for one year on the Vanderbilt University Institutional Review Board for Research; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of her exemplary military service, Harriett Lavinia Howard was the recipient of numerous awards and commendations, which include the Commander Navy Recruiting Command Gold Wreath with thirteen stars for recruiting excellence, two Navy Commendation Medals, the Navy Achievement Medal, Navy Meritorious Unit Citation, Good Conduct Medal, Naval Reserve Meritorious Service Medal with three stars, American Theater Medal, World War II Victory Medal, National Defense Medal with one star, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Hour Glass, and the Naval Reserve Medal; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, Chief Harriett Howard received American Legion Post 5's Leon Gilbert Memorial Humanitarian Award; Middle Tennessee State University's Dr. Joe Nunley Memorial Award; Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs Special Certificate of Appreciation; Lifetime Achievement Award from the Rutherford County Community Services Committee; the Walton Road Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Medal of Honor; and the Smyrna Rotary Club's "Service Above Self" award; and

WHEREAS, in May 2006, the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee selected Harriet Howard from among 94,000 active volunteers throughout the VA System of 94 facilities as the Female Volunteer of the Year for 2005; and

WHEREAS, Chief Harriett Howard was a member of the Davidson County Veterans Coordinating Council; Life member of Disabled American Veterans, Chapter #08; Life member of WAVES National, Volunteer Unit #94; Life member of Fleet Reserve Association, Branch #110; Life member American Veterans (AMVETS) Post 1776; American Legion Post #5; Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 953; Life member National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS); and the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Howard was an active and devout member of Stones River Baptist Church, which she served faithfully for many years; and

WHEREAS, devoted to her family, she is survived by her sister, Mary Hibbett, and one nephew, five nieces, nine great-nephews, and one great-niece; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Howard leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Chief Petty Officer Harriett Lavinia Howard, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Chief Petty Officer Howard.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.